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ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 120724Z MAY 09
FM AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0187
INFO RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 6956
RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO 7275
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA 2597
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 5319
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 6463
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 3031
RUEHCI/AMCONSUL KOLKATA 4599
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RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC
RHEHNCS/NSC WASHDC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 3523

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KATHMANDU 000404

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR SCA/INSB

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/12/2018

TAGS: PGOV PTER KDEM NP

SUBJECT: NEPAL'S MAOISTS RUN AMOK IN RAMECHHAP AND OTHER DISTRICTS

REF: A. KATHMANDU 400
1B. KATHMANDU 377
1C. KATHMANDU 375
1D. KATHMANDU 364

Classified By: Ambassador Nancy J. Powell. Reasons 1.4 (b/d).

Maoists Threaten Other Parties

11. (SBU) Following the resignation of Prime Minister Pushpa Dahal on May 4, the Maoist District Organization Committee in Ramechhap, a hilly district 75 km east of Kathmandu, issued an ultimatum to members of the Nepali Congress (NC) and Communist Party of Nepal - United Marxist Leninist (UML) to leave the district within five days. The Maoists accused the NC and UML of conspiring with "foreign forces" and demanded that party members leave the district, sever ties to the NC and UML, or face the consequences (Ref C). On May 5, Maoist cadres in Ramechhap vandalized the UML district office and attempted to take a senior UML leader under control until the police intervened, according to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). Post and OHCHR have received reports from other districts across Nepal of similar Maoist threats to parties who supported President Ram Baran Yadav's reinstatement of Chief of Army Staff Katawal (Ref D).

OHCHR Investigates

12. (C) Richard Bennett, the Nepal Representative for OHCHR, told the Ambassador on May 11 -- a day after the Maoists' ultimatum date -- that local officials did not expect the situation to escalate. An OHCHR team that traveled to the district May 6-11 reported that there had been no incidents since May 7. (Note: OHCHR and embassy contacts say that the threats continue, although none have led to violence. End note.) The Ramechhap Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) told the OHCHR team that he was unable to arrest the responsible Maoist district leader because of security concerns. The DSP said he would need additional security forces to carry out the arrest and was concerned that he did not have enough evidence to detain the Maoist leader for more than a couple of days. Nevertheless, the police did not request extra staff. OHCHR plans to send another team to

Ramechhap on May 13.

Threats in Other Districts

¶3. (SBU) OHCHR has received numerous reports of threats by Maoist or Young Communist League (YCL) cadres against NC and UML members in the eastern districts of Panchthar, Taplejung, Terhathum, Khotang, and Siraha and in the central districts of Rasuwa, Sindupalchok, Dolakha, Dhading, and Sindhuli. With the exception of Panchthar -- in which scuffles on May 6 and 9 led to the stabbing of an NC member in the hand and, in a separate incident, the YCL assault of a UML supporter, her family, and several bystanders over a local dispute at a water tap -- threats have not resulted in serious violence. Most districts to the west of Dhading were largely peaceful following the Prime Minister's resignation, although the Maoists did stage widespread demonstrations that in some cases got out of hand. On May 7, Maoists threw stones that damaged the house of an NC supporter in Bardiya district in the midwestern Terai. The same evening in Bardiya, ten masked men reportedly thrashed a UML-affiliated former Village Development Committee chair and two NC activists, although the Maoists denied responsibility. On May 9, Maoist cadres again attacked UML and NC supporters in Bardiya, alleging that these two parties had backed the decision of the President.

Comment

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¶4. (C) Whether the incidents in Ramechhap and other districts were the result of clear direction from the Maoist leadership in Kathmandu is unclear. However, there is little to suggest that the Maoist leadership has actively dissuaded their district-level cadres to desist from threats of violence. Ambassador Powell raised the issue at the May 6 and 11 meetings of the diplomatic corps and Prime Minister (Refs A and B). On May 11, the Ambassador and the heads of mission of the UK, Netherlands, Germany, France, Finland and Denmark sent a letter to the Prime Minister expressing their concern about the incidents and offering to travel in person to Ramechhap to monitor the situation. Post will continue to urge the central Maoist leadership to direct its party affiliates to cease all forms of intimidation and vandalism. Post will also continue to encourage the Maoists, NC, and UML -- as well as the Madhesi parties -- to reach a consensus to move beyond the current political impasse.

POWELL